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Recent emphasis has been placed on the cognitive processes and the present, rather than absent, skills of those deficient in intellectual performance. Literature on the mentally retarded, on the socially disadvantaged, and on the relationship of social conditions to intellectual and language development is covered. The monumental work of the past six years in the field of mental retardation, and the book that probably has most influenced the development of the field, is <u>Mental Subnormality</u> by Masland, Sarason, and Gladwin (1958). Among more recent books are <u>Handbook of Mental Deficiency</u> edited by Ellis (1963), <u>Mental Retardation</u> by Rothstein (1961) and <u>Educating Exceptional Children</u> by Kirk (1962). Proper educational planning can overcome the deficiencies of the children from disadvantaged circumstances. The emphasis has been on early compensation for the deficiencies in home environment. The books discussed are <u>Intelligence and Experience</u> by Hunt (1961); <u>The Process of Education</u> by Bruner (1960); <u>Education in Depressed Areas</u> by Passow (1963); <u>The School Dropout</u>, edited by Schrieber (1964); and <u>Integrating the Urban School</u>, edited by Klopff and Laster (1963). A review of studies conducted on the relationship of social conditions to intellectual and language development is presented. The emphasis on educational planning for disadvantaged children shows that the major emphasis in educational programing has been to initiate programs before the gap between these children and their more advantaged peers widens beyond reach. Included are a bibliography and additional references.							
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CHAPTER V

Education for Disadvantaged Groups

CYNTHIA P. DEUTSCH •

In recent years, considerable attention has been focused on the stimulation and development of cognitive processes. Within this area, a most important subarea has been evaluation of the varying etiologies of defective intellectual performance. The work done here has led to a much more sophisticated view of mental retardation and of poor academic performance than that which previously existed. There have been many studies of the learning process and of concept formation in retardates, aiming to define relevant variables. Observed results from these studies are related to cohesive bodies of theory, such as Piaget's, rather than left to languish in the specialized literature of mental retardation. The over-all effect of this work has been to bring the area of mental retardation much deeper into the educational and psychological mainstream.

Review of the literature for the past period supports a generalization that the emphasis has shifted from the classification of mental deficiency and a concern with institutional organization and community services to a greater concern with interventional and educational programs in order to minimize the effects of retardation. More and more, the retarded are being studied in terms of the abilities and skills that they have and that can be developed, rather than in terms of those that they apparently lack. Both these recent emphases—on cognitive processes on the one hand and on present rather than absent skills on the other—have led to greater interest in educational programming for the retarded. Recent literature, both research and theoretical, reflects these emphases.

Foremost among the etiologies of retardation receiving greater emphasis is that of environmental deprivation. An early article by Benton (1956) deserves mention here as being one of the first in the recent period to present a cohesive approach to environmental determinants in retardation. Though the term Benton used, *pseudofeeble-mindedness*, has fallen into disuse, and though his emphasis was still on the interaction of emotional and cultural status with what he termed the "basic hereditary factor," the approach exemplified in that article can be considered the transitional one. Following that time, and as a result of greater scientific and social concerns with the portion of our population labeled disadvantaged or deprived, there has been a growing interest in evaluating the effects of environmental conditions on mental functioning. The emphasis here has

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been both in terms of identifying the socially deprived and retarded (e.g., Jensen, 1961) and in terms of a more global evaluation of the effects on intellectual performance of disadvantageous environments (e.g., John, 1963; Deutsch, 1963), leading to attempts to reverse the effects of environmental deprivation. These active and proposed intervention programs parallel the educational attempts directed toward improving the active skills and awakening the latent skill in children and adults whose retardation stems from neurological inadequacy.

With the increase in the range of specialties concerned with problems of mental deficiency, there has been a corresponding increase in the number of books and articles published. The literature in mental retardation is voluminous and disparate. As a result, no review of it is included here. Instead, only a few of the current books are mentioned; the literature on educational programs for the socially disadvantaged is covered more extensively, though by no means exhaustively.

The Mentally Retarded

The monumental work of the past six years in the field of mental retardation, and the book that probably has most influenced the development of the field, is *Mental Subnormality* by Masland, Sarason, and Gladwin (1958). The authors reported a survey of the field of mental subnormality and divided the book into two major parts: the section by Masland dealt with research into biological factors in retardation; the other, by Sarason and Gladwin, treated environmental and cultural research. The authors did not regard biological and environmental factors as actually distinct but as separate yet interacting etiologies. They also made explicit their attack on what they term a *shibboleth*: the idea of "a hereditary taint as the basis for all mental subnormality" (p. 6). Their approach fosters educational programs; they assumed that retardates can be taught.

Among more recent books is *Handbook of Mental Deficiency*, edited by Ellis (1963). The distribution of chapters reflects many of the continuing concerns in the mental retardation field (e.g., perceptual processes, intelligence, and brain damage); also included are some which represent departures (e.g., the application of Piaget's theory to research on mental deficiency, research on activity level). Important omissions are the effects of social deprivation and contributions of psychology to educational programming. In *Mental Retardation*, Rothstein (1961) presented a broad range of chapters, in many of which are described or discussed educational programs and techniques for the mentally retarded. *Educating Exceptional Children*, by Kirk (1962), a book which is particularly relevant, includes a survey of educational practices for a wide variety of exceptional children, including the gifted, the physically handicapped, and the emotionally disturbed as well as the retarded.

The Socially Disadvantaged

The concern with the socially disadvantaged as a specific educational grouping and as a specific educational problem is relatively recent. This interest has been fostered by the increasing urbanization of our population and by the awareness of stratification and differential privilege within our society. Henry (1963) pointed out that the middle class home contains a "hidden curriculum" which enables the child to deal appropriately with his first school experience. The disadvantaged home contains no such curriculum and, as pointed out by Deutsch (1961a), represents a discontinuity with the school environment. Since the urban slum school also is more crowded and experiences greater turnover of both pupils and personnel than does the middle class neighborhood school, researchers in the area have been led to deal with school organizations as well as with the learning and response of the individual child. Further, since urban slum inhabitants include a high percentage of people from minority group backgrounds, desegregation and integration have become intertwined in the considerations of educational programs for the socially disadvantaged.

Two general books that have contributed a great deal to the considerations of educating the socially disadvantaged are *Intelligence and Experience* by Hunt (1961) and *The Process of Education* by Bruner (1960). Hunt explored a great number of tacit assumptions about the immutability of intelligence. With a thorough review of Piaget's concepts buttressed by implications from animal studies and a review of pertinent child development research, Hunt attempted to establish the prime influence of experience in the development of intelligence. This concept of the influence of experience underlies the institution of special educational programs for children from the slums, who are subjected to experiential deprivation of varying degrees. Bruner supported special programs by emphasizing the "teachability" of almost all knowledge, if the correct approach is used. Bloom (1961) further emphasized the mutability of intellective as well as other characteristics of the child.

Education in Depressed Areas, edited by Passow (1963), deals directly with many different aspects of the problem of the education of the disadvantaged child. Chapters by different authors are divided into sections on "Schools in Depressed Areas," "Psychological Aspects of Education in Depressed Areas," "Sociological Aspects of Education in Depressed Areas," "Teachers for Depressed Areas," and "School Programs in Depressed Areas." The book includes a substantial bibliography.

The emphasis in *The School Dropout*, edited by Schreiber (1961), is on the children that the school loses. This book, which is a collection of articles by different writers, is divided into "Societal Factors" and "Implications for School Programs."

Questions concerning integration are discussed in *Integrating the Urban School*, edited by Klopff and Laster (1963). While the papers included in

the book refer specifically to the problems in the New York City schools, the issues discussed are probably generalizable to any urban community.

The implication of the material in the books discussed so far is that, with proper educational planning, the deficiencies of the children from disadvantaged circumstances can be overcome. The emphasis has been on early compensation for the deficiencies in home environment. Riessman (1962) argued, however, that the disadvantaged are poorly prepared in a relative sense only and that educational programs can be begun at any age. Such programs, according to Riessman, should start with the real strengths that disadvantaged children possess in nonverbal communication and independence and should not rely on the middle class model. However, Riessman's argument on cultural relativism does not take into consideration the increasing industrialization of our society and the consequent greater dependence on verbal communication which leads to a greater need for facility in verbal skills such as reading and writing.

Relationship of Social Conditions to Intellectual and Language Development

John (1963) reported that "consistent class differences in language skills were shown to emerge between groups of Negro children of different socio-economic class." Middle class children—children from more advantaged environments—were reported to have a better command of language in terms of its classificatory and problem-solving functions. The educational implication of these findings is for greater emphasis on language teaching for disadvantaged children, an implication supported in a study by Jensen (1963a). In studying different verbal learning tasks he found that paired-associate learning involved greater reliance on verbal mediators than did serial learning. His approach offers the possibility of a functional method of differentiating the socially disadvantaged from those children who are retarded as a result of other etiological factors. According to John (1963) and Bernstein (1960, 1962), the socially disadvantaged were less facile in the use of verbal mediators. The above studies open the problem of verbal mediation to both the diagnostic problems in low IQ findings and the educational problems in attempting to reverse the effects of environmental (linguistic) deprivation. The work of Kendler (1963), among others, is pertinent here.

Intelligence tests are known to be subject to linguistic and other environmentally determined factors. Deutsch and Brown (1964) attempted to determine the aspects of environment which contribute to lowering IQ. In a sample of 281 first and fifth grade children divided into groups on the basis of race and social class, they found that children from fatherless homes scored lower on the Lorge-Thorndike IQ test than did children from homes in which the father was present. Children who had had no preschool experience also scored lower than did children with preschool

experience. The data they reported are the first from an extensive study of intellectual and verbal factors related to socioeconomic status, race, and other individual and demographic factors. When the remainder of the study is published, researchers should have considerably more information and, simultaneously, considerably more problems to investigate.

Klineberg (1963) reviewed some old and some recent studies of the relationship between environment and intelligence and came to a conclusion which is in agreement with that of Deutsch and Brown (1961), namely, that there is a "cumulative deficit" associated with disadvantaged environments. As so many other studies have shown, children who are exposed to disadvantageous environments are subject to decline in intelligence score. According to Deutsch and Brown, this decline is evident by the fifth grade of school.

Additional References: Goss (1961); Luria and Yudovitch (1959); Vygotsky (1962).

Educational Programming

The major emphasis in educational programming for disadvantaged children has been to initiate programs before the gap between these children and their more advantaged peers widens beyond reach. This emphasis has led to development of programs on the nursery school level. Nursery programs that are oriented toward the stimulation of cognitive development find general support in Fowler (1962) and in Jensen (1963b). Their psychological basis was specifically elaborated by Hunt (1961) and their usefulness explicitly posited by Deutsch (1961b). The emphases in both articles were (a) that the preschool years are important in building the basic skills which underlie cognitive development and (b) that the assumptions which have guided the use of these years for noncognitive play are themselves invalid and are particularly inappropriate for the education of children subjected to deprived circumstances.

In general support of the same conclusion were papers which dealt with inadequate stimulation of perceptual skills (Deutsch, 1964) and with inadequate linguistic skills (John and Goldstein, 1964). Both papers indicated that slum homes are deficient in the stimulation required for adequate development of discrimination and of language skills. The two areas were bridged by a discussion of the relationship between auditory discrimination and linguistic and reading functions.

It is too early to evaluate either the import of these theories and recommendations or the success of the programs which they have stimulated. The results of the preschool programs for retarded children discussed by Kirk (1958) and by Connor and Talbot (1964) would seem to indicate that the approach can be productive. Since a number of preschool programs for disadvantaged children are now under way, it must remain for the next issue of the REVIEW in this area to report and evaluate their success.

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